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DE RUEHEK #0521/01 1241043
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O 041043Z MAY 07
FM AMEMBASSY BISHKEK
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9511
INFO RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING IMMEDIATE 2134
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO IMMEDIATE 0223
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA IMMEDIATE 0235
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD IMMEDIATE 0714
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL IMMEDIATE 0523
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU IMMEDIATE 0230
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI IMMEDIATE 0391
RUEKJCS/OSD WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUMICEA/USCENTCOM INTEL CEN MACDILL AFB FL IMMEDIATE
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE IMMEDIATE 2531
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE 1914
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO BRUSSELS BE IMMEDIATE
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS IMMEDIATE
RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORP IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BISHKEK 000521

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DEPARTMENT FOR SCA/CEN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/04/2017

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MARR](#) [KG](#)

SUBJECT: REFORM-MINDED PM LOOKS FOR U.S. SUPPORT OF
KYRGYZSTAN

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Classified By: Ambassador Marie L. Yovanovitch, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) On April 30, Ambassador met with Prime Minister Atambayev. Atambayev noted that the President and those around him are "euphoric they have won (against the opposition following the April demonstrations)," but said he would work with the President to make sure that there is no persecution of the opposition and civil society. Atambayev said that he had sat down with the Power Ministries and the Procuracy to gain release of the three opposition members held at GKNB headquarters which occurred May 27. Atambayev was visibly pleased when Ambassador told him that one of the three, Omurbek Abdurahmanov, was grateful to the Prime Minister for his actions.

12. (C) The Prime Minister stated that he sees it as his job to defend democracy and the opposition. He added that he had called in the deputy editor of Agym, one of the two newspapers that was the target of the GKNB raid on the Freedom House Printing Press, to see whether he could help. Atambayev also noted it was important to punish the "provocateurs" who started moving against the White House, as well as those who smashed car and store windows, so that Bishkek residents believe in the government's capability to maintain law and order and punish wrongdoers.

13. (C) Ambassador said that it was a constructive move to release the three opposition members, as keeping them incarcerated would provide a reason for the opposition to continue to protest, although in smaller groupings. She said that the events of April 19 had raised questions in Washington about Kyrgyzstan's commitment to democracy and reform. The Prime Minister responded passionately. He said

the Freedom House raid was "illegal" and that the government had made mistakes, but that as long as he is prime minister his government would "defend democracy" and move forward on reforms. He said he had spoken out on these issues and subsequently accepted the Ambassador's invitation to participate in an event in honor of World Press Freedom Day at Freedom House, where he was eloquent about the need to support and defend freedom of the press (septel).

¶4. (C) Atambayev urged the U.S. to be more active in Kyrgyzstan, to help a struggling democracy as "the future history of Kyrgyzstan is being decided now." Atambayev noted that Russia and Kazakhstan are very active and Kyrgyzstan must have strong relations with these two countries, but said that U.S. assistance is needed for the development of a strong democracy in Kyrgyzstan. Ambassador responded that the U.S. had supported the Kyrgyz people since independence and would continue to do so.

¶5. (C) COMMENT: Unaware that April 30 was a holiday, Atambayev had all his staff on hand and a full schedule. He told Ambassador that there was much to be done, reforms needed to be implemented, and he was not sure how much time he would have to finish the job. In short, he would rest later, he said. Atambayev was unprompted and unwavering in his desire to "defend democracy" in Kyrgyzstan and passionate about the need for the U.S. to support these efforts.

¶6. (C) Even before Atambayev took the PM slot, the long knives were out, and rumors continue that the President does not want Atambayev to become too strong and will fire him before that happens. For now, however, even critics such as former Foreign Minister Imanaliyev believe that Atambayev is one of the three most influential officials around the president. Even if Atambayev's influence is limited or

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relatively short-term, we need to seize the moment and work with this government. END COMMENT.
YOVANOVITCH